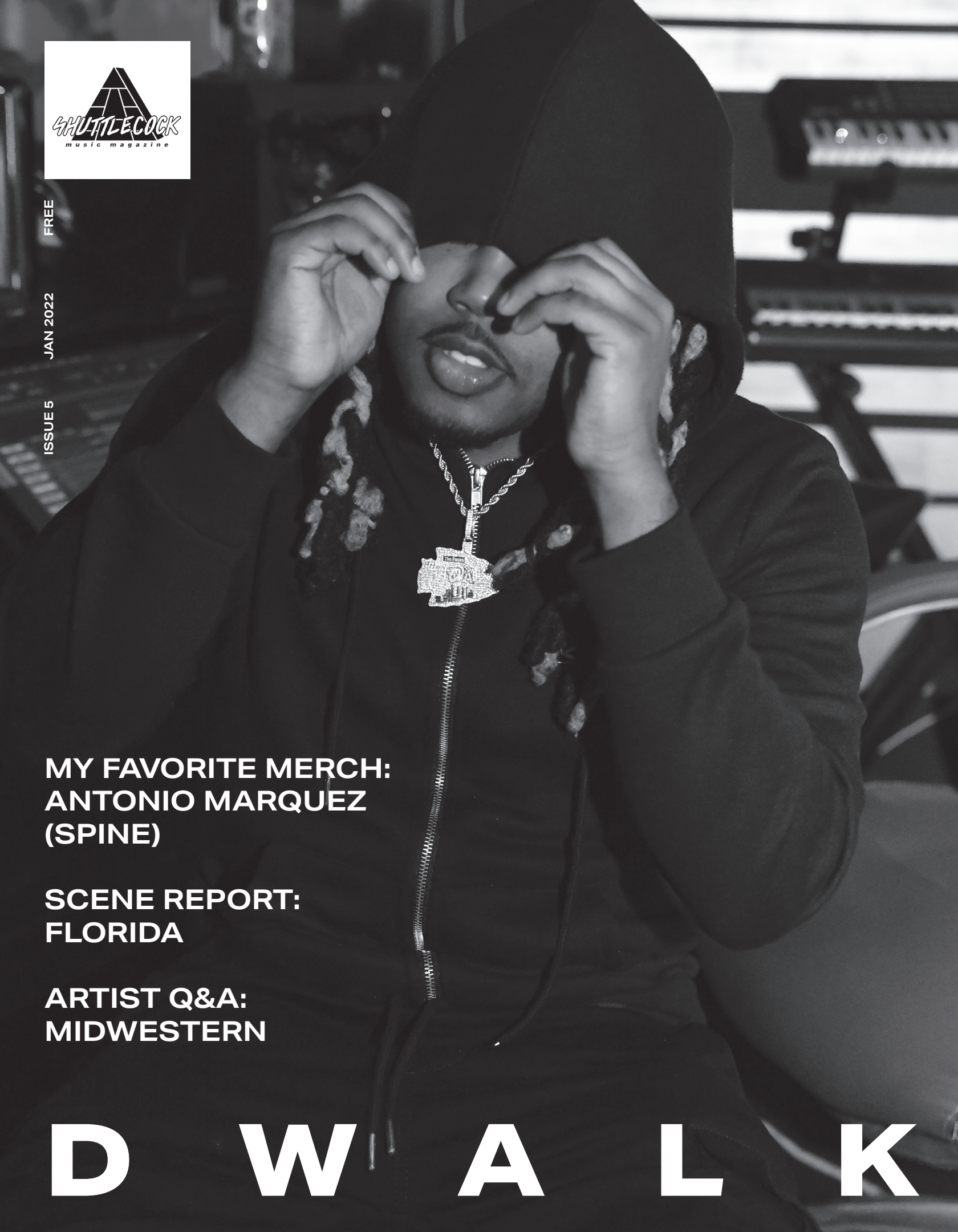

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music magazine

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ISSUE 5 JAN 2022

MY FAVORITE MERCH: ANTONIO MARQUEZ (SPINE)

SCENE REPORT: FLORIDA

ARTIST Q&A: MIDWESTERN

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: AARON RHODES
COVER PHOTO BY AARON RHODES
MAGAZINE DESIGN BY CLAIRE MONROE [CLORG]

LOCAL ARTIST Q & A

BROUGHT TO YOU BY 90.9 THE BRIDGE

BY AARON RHODES

MIDWESTERN

If you've attended enough DIY or all-locals punk or hip-hop events in Kansas City or Lawrence over the last six months, you've probably either seen Midwestern perform or bumped into one of its members in the crowd. Consisting of producer/DJ/vocalist Charmaine Ejelonu and producer/vocalist R.W. (joined by drummer Titus at some live shows), the duo makes a engaging, energetic, and occasionally noisy type of experimental hip-hop unlike that of any other local acts right now (though if you're a fan of Ebony Tusks, Young Mvchetes, American Terrorist, or Indiglow, you might dig them). We had planned to meet up for this interview at the Ethiopian/Caribbean restaurant Awazé on Main Street, but it was unexpectedly closed, so the following conversation took place within the confines of my car in the back parking lot.

So where did both of you guys grow up?

Charmaine
I was born in Nigeria and I moved to Overland Park at the age of six.
R.W.
[I'd just say] we work out of Kansas City. [I don't want to be any more specific than that.]

How did you guys decide on the name Midwestern?

R.W.
You're from around here. You know what it's like – that energy. You know the people, the feelings – the good and the bad.
Charmaine
The mundane feeling. Being from the Midwest.
R.W.
And also just like, you know, this kind of self v. self. We got a lot of space out here and I think we people value people in a different way.
Charmaine
Think about it, you're in the middle of everything, so what does that mean? As far as artistry, as far as a name?
R.W.
Yeah, it really isn't that deep. We're working from out here, we're doing stuff, and also like I said, it's underrepresented shit, man. There's a lot of fucking people around Kansas, Missouri, Iowa. People don't talk about it, like all movies and shit take place on the fucking coasts.
Charmaine
Yeah, there's the coastal thing, but like Midwestern and being from the Midwest is just such an enigma that hasn't been explored.

What musicians were important to you growing up or have been inspirational to your work in any way?

Charmaine
Pulling inspiration from certain individuals, you end up in a rabbit hole. You just want to pull from everybody and everybody's influenced by everything. I wouldn't necessarily say it's people and artists because, I mean, sure, that's a given.
R.W.
We listen to a lot of music. I feel like if we said too much about one thing, we might be just like, totally passing up some other shit, people we respect.
Charmaine
We say nature.
R.W.
Freedom.
Charmaine
God. That kind of encapsulates inspiration.

I was right, you are Vibes Guys. The feeling of freedom, the feeling of being in nature.

Charmaine
[Laughs] Not even in a free sense because nature can be… nature can cage you up just as much. You can fucking hate that shit. Because, like, you spend too much time, you get lost.
R.W.
Yeah, I don't wanna fight a bear.
Charmaine
[Laughs] Yeah, like no, fuck that. Can you imagine getting stuck in a fucking avalanche? There's nothing beautiful about that. But it's just like that power is just so all-encompassing. And there's just no limit.
R.W.
We're trying to do energy. We want some of it.

How did you guys meet and start making music together?

R.W.
I don't know, like the project. The project itself is essentially like, I don't know, it
Charmaine
– happens.
R.W.
But is this happening concurrently with our relationship?
Charmaine
It grows as we grow.
R.W.
Yeah. That's just some crazy shit because I love Charmaine, but making music is some crazy shit.
Charmaine
It turns you into something. It makes you explore parts of yourself that you didn't think were even there. And I guess like, honestly, it's fate.
R.W.
It's something like that. It's something like that.
Charmaine
It's just when two timelines intersect.
R.W.
I don't think that answers the question.

No, that's a valid answer [laughs]. Something I was curious about was the amount of improvisation and freestyling there is in your recorded music and your performances versus what's rehearsed. It's kind of difficult to parse as someone on the outside.

Charmaine
There's only so much you can do in rehearsal.
R.W.
You've got to see more shows. Because here's the thing, we're doing something different. We've done something different at every show. Our last show was just us with the beats, with no drummer. And we're trying to do different stuff. So I say there's a little bit of both because when you're performing a song in the modern idiom, you know, you're just rapping to a beat and that's what it is. You're singing your own song. So you don't want to change the beat, because why do that to the fucking people, especially if it's a popular song, why fuck with them? But for us, you know, we don't have to worry about that.
Charmaine
When you get out there and you're performing, there's not much to worry about because it's just you and the people and then kind of just like whatever you have left on the palate, you've just got to expose, you just got to do whatever feels right.
R.W.
Yeah. It's both. It's structured and we improvise. We do a little bit of both. I think just having a drummer keeps it a little [tighter].
Charmaine
I think sometimes with improv people assume that you don't take the time to care about what you're making. And I think that's a *really* big misconception. Because, you know, it's like our baby. [laughs]

Yeah, and unless it's your first time ever improvising, you're likely building off of past performances or accessing knowledge and skills that you've built up over time.

R.W.
We've gone to open mics with beats we just made that we haven't even tried out lyrics for and just gone up and just just fuckin' done the first thing off the top of our heads and shit like that. Ah, we're giving away too much. [laughs]

I guess I'm basing some of my questions off of seeing you guys at the Armand Hammer show at The Bottleneck. How would you say that show compared to other performances that you've done?

R.W.
We're just getting started. It's just the first of many.
Charmaine
I think everything is just a learning moment and every show that we do is a learning moment. You just soak it up and I think that's just like what life is every day, you just learn something new and that's just like what performing is.

I also think it's cool that I've seen you guys at a lot of different shows you're not playing and a lot of them featuring different styles of music. I don't think I'd ever seen you guys around before the pandemic though. So what was your exposure to live music like before the pandemic?

Charmaine
We just kept it lowkey.
R.W.
Yeah, any time I needed to get some anger out, I'd go to a show, throw some 'bows.
Charmaine
I just wanted to see everything. I mean, even before we met and started seeing shit.
R.W.
Yeah, when we started dating, that was one of the first things we talked about. We were just trading stories about who we'd seen, what we listened to.
Charmaine
But like, I think that's really important to also see things for yourself, too, and then create something out of whatever inspires you.

Charmaine, you also do DJ sets. Since I haven't seen one myself yet, what kind of music do you like to play during those? And what about DJing appeals to you in contrast to performing in Midwestern.

Charmaine
I play anything. I think a really important thing about being a DJ is understanding the heartbeat of your crowd and trying to get that shit racing. I play everything. Like, as long as BPMs kind of work, they don't even have to, I just play anything that can make somebody dance or anyone smile or anything. That's what motivates me as a DJ – just being able to see people dance and actually just do it.

And I think one of the things that's a little bit different about doing that and also being in Midwestern is that being a DJ, you get to expose music that you can't make, so that's a cool opportunity. But I love it. I do.

So you guys have released a handful of Bandcamp singles so far. Are you working towards doing an EP or a full-length project?

R.W.
It's all on the way. We just keep it chill, we move a little slower. We're careful about what we put into the world.

And all of the tracks you've released so far have sounded a little bit different from each other. Do you think you're working towards honing in on a specific sound or do you think it's going to stay relatively eclectic?

Charmaine
The songs, they capture a moment and that's what we're doing. We're just capturing moments. It's like taking a picture, you know, it's just like a figment, like some passing time.
R.W.
We're just taking our time with it.
Charmaine
Slow cooking. Slow cook that shit. Marinate it.

On your song "Total Peace" I caught a bit of what sounded like trip-hop influence. Is that a sound you guys are into?

R.W.
Trip-hop? What the fuck is a trip-hop? [laughs]

You know! Like Porishead, Massive Attack, that kind of stuff.

R.W.
If [it does sound like trip-hop], it's purely coincidental, I couldn't tell you what we were trying to do on the song. Thank you for bringing that up, though, because we're trying to figure out what people are gonna, like, we were trying to figure out, we're trying to figure out what genre [people are going to try to label us].

I apologize in advance for contributing to that – boxing you in.

Charmaine
Boxes make things a lot more organized. They're good.

Yeah, and whenever people try to denigrate something by calling it "mumble rap" or some other name, it's usually an artform that I see as being as valid as any other. I just see genres and labels as useful for marketing and getting people interested in an artist if they don't have the patience or haven't had the time to listen yet.

R.W.
So, just curious, what genre or scene would you consider us as a whole?

When I hand someone a flyer for one of your shows or just want to give someone the gist, I would probably just say cool, experimental hip-hop.

Charmaine
That's one box I will stand by: being cool. [laughs] We're cool.

I guess we'll wrap up in a second here, but what should people expect from your upcoming releases and live shows?

Charmaine
Movement, to dance, and to be present.
R.W.
They can expect a presence. Expect some crazy shit. Movement, presence? It sounds like they're gonna go to a yoga class!
Charmaine
[Laughs] Is that not what this is?
R.W.
And fighting. Just understand this: at our shows, anything can happen. What's that law? What's-his-fuck's law? If it can happen, anything can happen.

I've heard of this law. I do not know to whom it belongs either.

R.W.
But that's all it is. We're trying to have a fun time. We want our shows to be fun. Play some good music, play it loud, and anything can happen.
Charmaine
And have fun!

And it'll be *cool*.

R.W. and Charmaine, in unison
It'll be *cool*.

PHOTOS BY AARON RHODES

You can listen to Midwestern at Midwestern816.Bandcamp.com. You can find them on Instagram at @Midwestern.816 and on Twitter at @Midwestern816.

To discover more new music, local and beyond, listen to 90.9 The Bridge and visit their website at Bridge909.org.

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MY FAVORITE MERCH

BY AARON RHODES

ANTONIO MARQUEZ

"Antonio Marquez is a pillar of the community!" *That's what I'd shout if I was a loudmouthed New Yorker and somebody said something to disrespect Antonio Marquez. Not that anyone does have a reason to disrespect him. Antonio has been a part of Kansas City's hardcore scene for over a decade, singing in the bands Sorry Excuse, Contrast, and Spine and instilling fear into the hearts of any mosh pit weaklings whenever a Bad Brains cover is played. Considering he's a lifelong music fan who enjoys many different genres (we talk hardcore, punk, salsa, and post-punk below and got into some country music chat before we started recording), he has one of the most impressive merch collections of anyone I know. So let's dig in, yeah?*

What shirt are you wearing right now?
My [Cro-Mags] tie-dye shirt.
This is one of your three picks?
No, I just have a lot of different types of music shirts that I like to collect. So yeah, it was kind of hard thing to pick.

Where do you pick up a tie-dye Cro-Mags shirt? Was that official merch?
Official, 1993, *Near Death Experience* tour. Euro tour. I had a longsleeve and I had two t-shirts. But I got these maybe in the last like eight to 10 years or something like that. And then with the popularity and stuff like that and the obscurity, it's now considered up there next to like the Down But Not Out '89 tour Cro-Mags shirts, but I just like it. I like the record. I actually liked the record. So it's a cool shirt. I got rid of the longsleeve and my extra shirt a few years ago.

Antonio, how do you feel about the Wonder Woman movie Cro-Mags t-shirt controversy? [Laughs.]
Yeah, 'cause it was like that, arguing because like, it was '84 and then the shirt was obviously -- the record came out in '86 or whatever. I mean, it's goofy. [Laughs.]

Yeah, that was a fun discourse to watch for about a week.
Yep. Yeah, it was a big year. It was like all over the place, man. Yeah, it was very much like, "Well actually, the demo was recorded in '84." I actually have the demo tape and I think it was actually recorded in '84 but then they were like, "Well the artwork done blah, blah, whatever." You know the artwork that probably would have been on that shirt if it was true to the time period, probably some problematic shit, you know?

Yeah. So I usually start by asking what your first piece of band merch that you remember being excited about owning was. Is that something you remember?
Yeah, bro. This is 1999, Sam Goody. You know what Sam Goody is? Sam Goody sold CDs. They were like $20 CDs in the mall and they did shirts in the back and posters and some novelty tapes or whatever.

And I remember really being into Korn and so *Follow The Leader* had come out or whatever. Ironically, not my favorite Korn record, but *Follow The Leader* had come out and this was like the Limp Bizkit era, this is like MTV on in the summer 24/7, Tom Green Show, all this shit. Sam Goody had some discounted shirts and it was like this olive green Korn shirt with the *Follow The Leader* artwork, but there was like a kid with a backwards hat and a CD discman player listening to music. And there was an orange sort of bubbly outline to it. It was fucking weird. And I got it for like nine bucks or something like that and that was like my first piece of merch.

Then my second piece was shortly after that, when I was like, "I really like wearing merch." Rockabilia had a catalog and you would look at the little thumbnails and shit and I bought a Nine Inch Nails shirt by money order. Sent it and it was on sale for like 12 bucks. Those are like the first two ones and then I remember my first one from eBay when eBay was coming up, it was the early 2000s. It was just like a picture of Marilyn Manson's face, it had Marilyn Manson [written] on it below and it was I don't know, like 10 bucks again, money order sent through mail. It's just crazy how things have changed.

You mentioned Rockabilia and I'm guessing they do not send out physical catalogs anymore, but I do remember looking at their website a lot when I was in sixth grade and middle school, getting into kind of starter pack '90s punk and alternative rock bands and stuff like that. So I don't know if I ever ordered anything from them. Maybe a NOFX t-shirt or something at some point. Also important to me, I definitely ordered some stuff from Interpunk. And I always lump these three together: Rockabilia, Interpunk, and Angry, Young, And Poor.
Yeah, man. Those catalogs for Rockabilia were just all alphabetical order and they're real small thumbnails on these catalogs. Kinda like CCS did. Those were the ones you would get with your friends, you just flip through them all the time looking at the new decks. Same thing, I remember going through and seeing shirts for a band at the time -- I had no idea -- Eyehategod and being like, "This is crazy." It was for *Dopesick* and it was like the cover art for it. I was just like, "What the fuck is this? This is nuts."

There was a lot of stuff like that I was exposed to, but I would use that to get into bands and learn more about bands and stuff like that, because this was Napster era, basically. And so you would be like, "Okay, what does fuckin' Dimmu Borgir sound like?" This is before YouTube, you had to type it in, download it. So yeah, it was pretty pivotal with merch stuff.

But yeah, that's basically how my merch [collecting] started. And that Korn shirt, actually, I probably wouldn't rock a Korn shirt anymore. I don't really care about Korn anymore. I mean, I like it, I'll listen to it and stuff like that, but it hasn't grown with me. ... I'm not gonna wear that Korn shirt, but I thought it'd be cool to have what that first shirt was because it was like '99 and you got to think I was probably 11 years old then. And I was into music really young and I'd trade baseball cards for CDs and shit and that was my first one. I thought it'd be cool to try to find it again and just have one just for the sake of having it.

Definitely post about that if you track one down for yourself. What's the first of your three shirts?
I was trying to pick it because I have a lot of stuff that people haven't seen before, that I don't wear often or whatever, but I really wear everything that I have. Just not as often as some people do, but this is probably my number one. I have a lot of cool shit. This is definitely like my number one.

So, Bad Brains is my favorite punk band of all time. No question, most important to me. Second, probably Agnostic Front. So this is the *Quickness* tour tee. And the '89 tour, which is really cool. '89 was just such a sick year for music and hardcore was changing, especially if you think about what was going on with New York and the transition from like '86 to '88 -- your demo-core stuff and then things kind of shifting -- your Underdog. You had a lot of bands like Supertouch that were coming up. Obviously, there's a big shift musically, sonically, with punk and hardcore, so *Quickness* comes out, everyone hates it. I've just always been really fond of *Quickness* and the styles from it and I think a lot of the music from *Quickness* is very much -- a lot of influences are even more prevalent now. And I think *Quickness* is received a lot better [now] than it was when it came out.

But I think Mackey from Cro-Mags actually played drums on that record, which is really cool. But the thing about this shirt specifically is that this shirt, there's a few different Bad Brains *Quickness* tour shirts, like colorways -- this one specifically was only available for like two shows. And the story is that the shirts were made for a gig that they played, I think it was in Southern California or maybe like Tijuana or something like that. I can't remember. And as they were playing the gigs, Dr. Know was supposed to be in charge of the merch or whatever. He had a box of these. They sold them at those two dates and then for whatever reason, he lost the box of shirts, so they had to rush order some other shirts, which are the yellow versions. But as far as this dark navy blue, there's not many of these since they were only sold at a few shows. So I was really fortunate to get one of these, especially with the front design and the back designs.

Yeah, that one's sick. Funny enough, we also talked about a *Quickness* tour tee that LT has in her merch interview, though she never wears it and has it hanging on her wall since it's already in not the best shape.
Oh, really? I think she showed it to me. Isn't it the white version? I think the front design is different but the back is the same [as mine].

Yeah, I think so. Wonderful how that tour has touched two of these columns so far.
Well, if you think about it, too, *Quickness* came out in maybe '88, the tour was in '89. I could be wrong. But you have to think the sizing on shirts in the '80s was not comparable to now. Your XLs basically fit like mediums, maybe a small large, you know? So, for me, I'm tall. I'm like 6' 5", 220. I can't wear an '80s XL for most stuff, but since this is towards the end of the '80s and they were starting to make the bigger sizing, I can rock that XL.

I had a large *Quickness* tour shirt and it was a European *Quickness* tour shirt. It was yellow and the person I got it from had the concert ticket that they purchased it from in London, which was really cool. I could never wear it. So eventually I sold it or traded it or something like that with the concert ticket. ... And I think that's one of the reasons why you might see more *Quickness* stuff than *I Against I* or even *Rock For Light* or anything like that, especially stuff like that from *Rock For Light* era and the *ROIR Sessions* or whatever, that's really, really fucking hard to come by because we're almost 40 years out from the birthplace of hardcore.

So what's your next tee?
Alright, so this one is interesting. This is a Fania All-Stars 30th anniversary shirt. So for people that don't know, Fania was a record label that put out a lot of very important Latin music from the '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s. That's where you have some of your greats, obviously like Celia Cruz, Johnny Pacheco, Ray Barretto, Willie Colon, Hector Lavoe.

And Spine has sampled Lavoe. Was he on that tour?
Hector Lavoe died in '89 I think, maybe '90, and this tour was in 1995. But he's part of that whole group. So it's like a record label. I think about [Revelation], like if it was like our Rev tour, which I guess they've done, but like a Rev tour with basically similar sounding acts as well. So you had like Yomo Toro, you had El Condé, you had like a lot of people that played Latin soul, salsa music, in general that were part of it.

So Fania for me is really pretty important. I love Spanish music in general, but salsa music is really near and dear. I mean salsa is like a mixture of a lot of different sounds, particularly from Cuba. And because of the revolution and all the stuff that came with the country like politically, your salsa artists and those artists from Cuba and the music that they helped kind of cultivate, those artists never really got to be like some of these. Most of the artists that were part of Fania are mostly Puerto Rican, Dominican, Venezuelan, Colombian artists, so yeah, for me it's pretty cool. And Fania, I think it's the last name of the guy that owned the record label. He wasn't Latino at all if I understand correctly, but anyways.

What, is he Italian!?
[Laughs] I have no idea, but the cool thing is the shirt's kind of an interesting design. It almost looks like it's potentially a parking lot [bootleg].

I forgot to ask. Where did you find these first two shirts?
Alright, so the Bad Brains shirt I got from someone that got it from a friend of mine. They got it from a friend of mine in Chicago who got it from Dr. Know. Dr. Know had some extras from that box or whatever that he had sold, I think in the early 2000s, that he had found. And that was one of them.

This [Fania] one, I just got this. I was searching for it, found it on Depop. I actually got this maybe two years ago or something like that for 10 bucks. So yeah, the merch game has gotten so fragmented from what it used to be. So it's really hard to find things nowadays. Because it's like, in some ways, it's really easy, in other ways it's super hard. I mean, how many people are out there trying to buy stuff like this?

Yeah, and the stuff that is easy to find is all over $100.
Yep. Exactly. Yeah. 100 percent. Because people will think that they thrift something and they look it up and be like, "Oh, this is worth $400!"

But you like the record. [Laughs.]
I do like the record. It's kind of a weird Mags record because if you listen to it through the vacuum of what was going on in 1994, 1993 musically in the United States with grunge and alternative music, it makes sense. But anyways.

What's your third piece you're sharing?
Alright, so I'm not a sad boy like [David] Chavez is, but I love some sad boy music. This is a Cure *Disintegration* tour shirt. So this is the 1989 Prayer tour shirt. I really love The Cure. Big, big Cure fan. *Disintegration* is actually not my favorite Cure record. Pornography is my favorite Cure record, but this I like *Disintegration* basically front to back. And the coolest thing about this shirt is the back. So there's a white version of this shirt that has green ink to it. And I've always loved it and I had one and it had holes and stains on it and it barely fit me, so I got rid of it. And I've always been trying to search for it.

This thing popped up maybe like six or seven years ago. Someone had barely worn it. I don't know if you can tell, but it's pretty crispy like for a shirt from '89 and it fits pretty well. And I just always wanted it just because I love that record. *Pornography* came out in '82. There's no shirt that was released that probably would fit me. So this is probably the closest I'm going to get and it's a pretty sick design.

Have you seen them live?
Yep, I saw them at Starlight, like like six years ago?

At least at least six years ago. Yeah.
Bro. Amazing. They played "The Hanging Garden." They played some *Pornography* songs and they played a lot of *Disintegration* stuff.

Amazing show, but my one critique was that they closed with "Boys Don't Cry" and played it at like two-thirds its original speed and part of what makes that song great is its tempo. I was like, "You can't end the show like this!" But otherwise, amazing time. Robert still had it.
Totally. Well, you know like the other thing too is I thought about this Depeche Mode shirt -- I thought about going straight up sad boy mode on all this and just showing my sad boy stuff, but seeing Depeche Mode would be insane. Like, I would die. They played here like seven years ago or something like that. I couldn't make it.

Yeah, it seems like their tours are pretty rare now, too.
Yeah, they did a pretty big one before COVID but didn't hit KC. It was pretty big though. But yeah, Depeche Mode would be pretty sick. But to your point on the "Boys Don't Cry" stuff. It's one of those things that I would love to -- I've never seen Bad Brains before and I'd love to just to say I did, but I can almost assure you that it would be like The Cure playing "Boys Don't Cry" at half speed, but for every song. [Laughs.]

Read the full interview at www.ShuttlecockMusic.com

Listen to Spine at SpineHC.Bandcamp.com or on digital streaming platforms. Listen to Antonio's Hard Stance Hardcore Podcast on Spotify.
He has also begun to catalog some of his merch on the Instagram account @WorldsUnfold.

RECENTLY ON THE SITE

BY AARON RHODES

THE FIRST ANNUAL SMM SLAM DANCER AWARDS

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Slam Dancer Awards
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Winners will receive a very fancy certificate, recognition in the magazine, and a free Shuttlecock merch bundle!
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Follow @ShuttlecockMag or else I'll see you in the pit

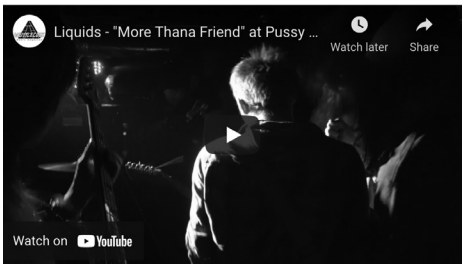
Pit warriors, slam dogs, two-steppers, and pogo freaks (crowd-killers, maybe) in Kansas City can finally vote in a way that truly matters. I'm proud to announce The First Annual Shuttlecock Slam Dancer Awards.

Voting is taking place now in all five categories: mosher of the year, pit newcomer of the year, best active local band/artist to mosh to, best touring act (from 2021) to mosh to, and best local venue to mosh at.

The polls close on January 21, 2022 and winners will be announced in February 2022. (I can tell if you try to spam the poll or vote more than once. Don't try nothin'.) (Individual voters' selections will not be shared without their consent.)

Winners will receive a very fancy certificate, recognition in an upcoming issue of the magazine, and a free Shuttlecock merch bundle.

LIQUIDS - "MORE THANA FRIEND" @ PUSSY PALACE



Northwest Indiana punk band Liquids' 2021 LP, Life Is Pain Idiot, got more hype than most of the prolific group's dozen plus releases from the past six years. "More Thana Friend," a song from that album, is a fine example of how foot-tappin' and head-bobbin' good the trio is. Enjoy this clip from Thursday night's gig in Kansas City.

Watch video on Shuttlecock's Youtube channel.

FROGPOND/THE CREEPY JINGLES AT RECORDBAR

Frogpond's first public show since reforming felt like a big class reunion for a school I didn't attend (or maybe one I did attend, but for an older class that I knew few people in). Spirits were high. COVID transmission was relatively low, folks were back in town for the Thanksgiving weekend, and one of Kansas City's favorite bands of the 1990's was finally ready for a gig.

PHOTO BY AARON RHODES

CAROLINE POLACHEK/ OKLOU AT LIBERTY HALL

Unless there's a show I'm overlooking, the Kansas City area is yet to host a performance from a capital-p popstar since the pandemic began (rock, hip-hop, and country stars have all played local arenas, stadiums, and large theaters since gigs got rolling again this past summer). One artist with boatloads of popstar potential that we have received a visit from, however, is Caroline Polachek. Fans at Liberty Hall earlier this month were treated to a headlining set that included the entirety of Polachek's 2019 debut, plus four songs from her yet-to-be-announced sophomore LP, a Corrs cover, and a Massive Attack cover accompanied by opening act Oklou.

PHOTO BY AARON RHODES

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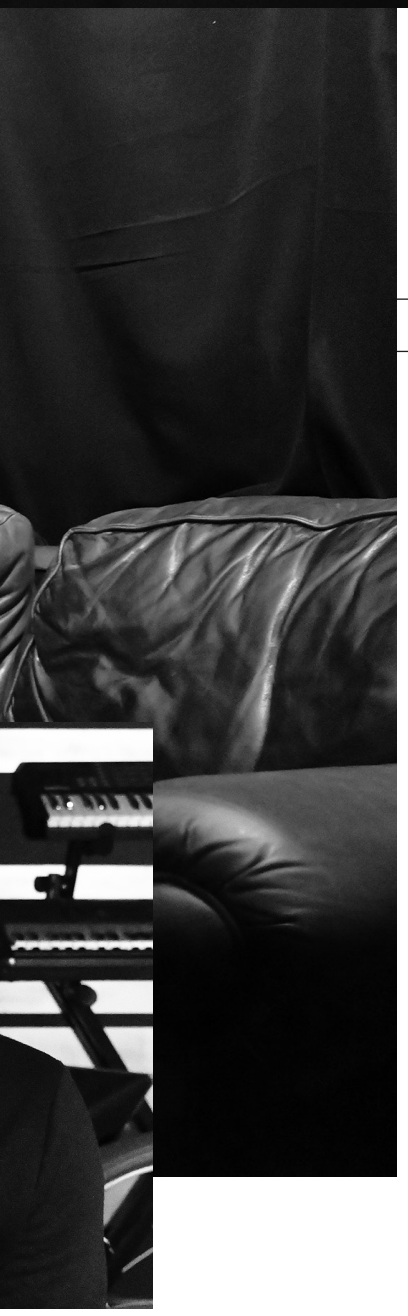

DWALK HAS CREATED A HYPERLOCAL HIT AND WON THE ATTENTION OF HIP-HOP KINGMAKERS

BY AARON RHODES

It was a rainy early November evening when I met Kansas City rapper DWalk at FSP Studios. The Independence, Missouri recording space is popular and well-regarded within the area's hip-hop scene and sits a stone's throw from both the Truman Sports Complex and Kansas City's Northeast. Slowly, but surely a small chunk of the rapper's crew trickles in. Everyone chats about a structure fire we all drove past down the street before the conversation pivots to basketball, plans for an impromptu trip to Los Angeles, and some teasing of their young photographer after he brings up a time when he went a bit overboard with some edibles.

A member of Walk's team assures me that the rapper isn't often on time and simply moves slow regardless of the occasion. I don't take it personally – I've encountered artists who've arrived for interviews far later or no-call-no-showed. After all, I considered myself lucky to be meeting with one of the city's most buzzed-about artists. Finally, not more than half an hour after our arranged time, Walk appears, greets me and his team, and quietly plants himself on a leather couch in the studio's front lobby.

Walk's unhurried nature in his day-to-day obligations is mirrored in the way he's been building his career in music. He started recording raps for the first time around the age of 18 in a makeshift studio setup his cousins had created in their basement. "I thought I was Lil Wayne and shit," Walk remembers as he discusses the impact that the Young Money era had on him as a young artist. It wasn't until 2013 that he switched over from burning CDs for friends to releasing mixtapes online.

After grinding away for years, releasing several projects and playing his share of smaller shows, Walk found himself with a local (and regional) hit. Familiar with the music of Bay Area rapper Too $hort from a young age thanks to his mother's interest in hip-hop and R&B, Walk was listening to the infamously raunchy track "Freaky Tales" when he realized he could put his own hyperlocal spin on it.

Named for Walk's 69th (nice) and Paseo stomping grounds (you'll also hear him refer to the area as "the 6"), "Freak Block Tales" was recorded rather spontaneously – "It was a no-brainer. I hopped right on that shit," he says – and has been an unstoppable force ever since its release in the summer of 2019. The song, even without a music video, has racked up over one million plays on YouTube alone.

Search for the song title on Twitter and you'll find posts about people encountering a busload of 10 year-olds rapping it or a 65 year-old white man blasting it at the gas station. Hot 103 Jamz DJ Brian B Shynin called it "the hottest song in the city." Every video clip I've seen of Walk performing it, or even just a DJ spinning it at a bar, club, or party features a full-room sing-along.

When you have a hit like that, you're sure to get recognized around town – Walk has tweeted about pulling up next to someone playing it at a stop light in the city before – but he's learned that the song has even hit the suburbs. "It'll be like a little white kid come up to me," he says. "That shit crazy as hell. I'll be like, 'Damn, this shit real as hell.' … I'm at Chick-Fil-A in Liberty. Little worker in the window is like, 'You DWalk ain't you?'"

Walk says that due to the prominent Too $hort sample, he's grown a small following in the Bay Area and has been in contact with a couple rappers from the region. He's even followed up with another Bay Area remix, "3M," which features Walk rapping confidently over the E-40 classic "Captain Save A Hoe." He told me he'd visited the Bay Area once before making these two songs, but is looking forward to his return.

Needless to say, when a song from an independent artist achieves one million spins, mostly via word of mouth and some local radio play, the music industry is going to take notice. Over the last couple years, Walk has cultivated a relationship with Lil Coach, the son of Quality Control Music co-founder Kevin "Coach K" Lee. The elder Coach (for those lacking in their trap music knowledge) has managed and helped launch the careers of some of the genre's biggest stars like Gucci Mane, Jeezy, Migos, Lil Baby, and others.

Though no official deal has been inked yet (Walk's team says both sides are still in the process of making sure a deal would be mutually beneficial), the connection alone has bolstered the rapper's credibility. The meetings he's taken with labels (not just QC) have also altered how he approaches his music and provided valuable feedback and insight regarding what type of music gets the attention of industry types.

"When I'm in the label meetings, they made it make sense that I should focus more toward the Midwest sound [opposed to more melodic sounds] because I could potentially be the face of Kansas City," Walk explains. "You got all the other Midwest cities, but they never really just heard a hardcore Kansas City sound, so when I dropped "Freak Block Tales" and shit like "3M," they were like, 'Damn, this is something the game never heard before.'"

Walk says he's grateful for what he's been able

"I'M AT A CHICK-FIL-A IN LIBERTY. LITTLE WORKER IN THE WINDOW IS LIKE, 'YOU DWALK AIN'T YOU?'"

to learn from Coach K and fellow QC co-founder Pierre "P" Thomas. "[Soaking up game], that's all you can do. You do less of the talking."

Though Walk seems to know now which types of sounds he wants to be zeroing in on, he did have a brush with something quite different back in 2018. In September of that year, he had released a single called "Clappers," which is arguably one of the most compelling twerk anthems Kansas City has ever produced. Despite its potency, Walk decided at one point or another that he didn't want to promote the song too hard, so as not to be pigeonholed as a "twerk rapper." I raved about the song in a blog post not long after its release and apparently I wasn't the only one whose ear had been caught. Walk gave DJ Rocky Montana his blessing to remix the song with an added verse from Houston's BeatKing – a figure known for his lewd, strip club-ready raps.

Nearly three years after the song's initial release (exactly eight days shy of the anniversary), the remix and an accompanying music video were released. This video (directed by Shawn Riddle) is a sight to behold, featuring Walk, Montana, and BeatKing partying at a rental house in Raytown surrounded by what appear to be at least one or two dozen scantily clad women shaking their asses by the pool, in the kitchen, and even on the roof. Perhaps Walk is glad that the song and video have only collected roughly 30,000 plays combined, but he says he doesn't regret the remix, noting that it's won him the attention of many hip-hop DJs.

Less grandiose but equally appealing is the "3M" video that sees Walk and a few friends grooving in a golf cart and on the putting green of a course in suburban South Kansas City. The rapper and his crew are all rocking custom Dagalleria (video director Davin Jeremiah's production company) athleisure polo tees and matching Gladism ball caps and shorts. Gladism is Walk's own brand that he's been repping for several years now (GLAD being short for Golden Links Art Dynasty; the ism because "it's just a way of life me and my brothers was livin'.")

The video was so clean that I was intrigued enough to ask when I could own such garments. Walk says he's keeping the drops limited for now. "I be trying to keep it limited so only fresh people can have that shit," Walk says. "I don't want everybody wearing that shit. I just want it to be some exclusive shit. Not everybody can get Virgil's shit when he drop."

Will we see a merch drop next year? Maybe. What Walk did assure me of was that 2022 would certainly hold a new project, features, music videos, and plenty of shows. He released an EP on New Year's Eve (which happens to be his birthday) back in 2019, so who knows what this Capricorn season may hold. (I asked him, from one Cap to another, if he puts much stock in astrology: "I'm pickin' up on that shit, [but] that shit confusing sometimes.")

"This shit about to go crazy," Walk says of the coming months. And who would I be to not trust a goat from the 6?

PHOTOS BY AARON RHODES

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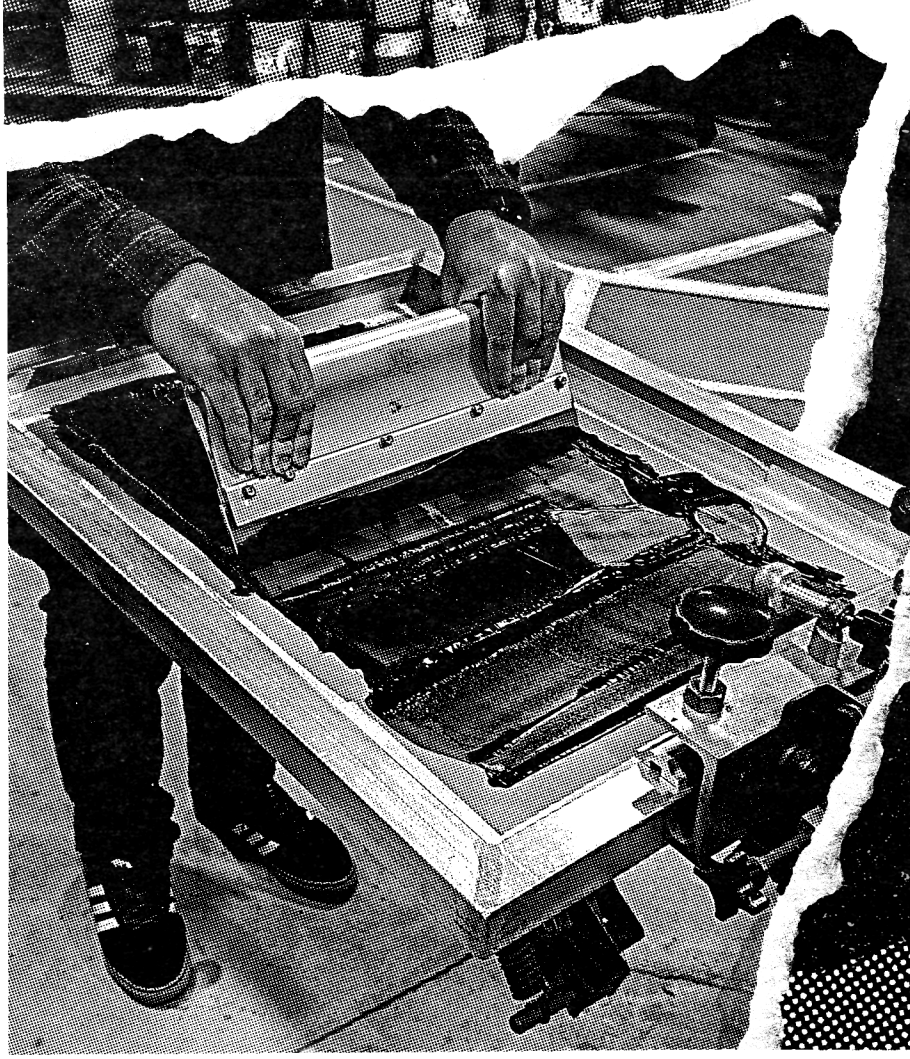

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FLORIDA SCENE REPORT

WITH DAVID DONIGAN

BY AARON RHODES

I first met David Donigan in June 2019 when I booked a band he played drums in, Jackal, for a show in the Middle East basement in Kansas City. I didn't get to do much hanging out with the band that night, but we've kept up on social media and I figured he might be able to tell me a little more about punk and hardcore in the Sunshine State (despite his recent move to Richmond, Virginia). The Zoom call this is transcribed from took place in June 2021, so forgive any time sensitive elements. I procrastinated on it pretty hard, but once I pressed play and remembered how fun our chat was, I completed it in one (long) evening.

Florida is a big enough state where there are simultaneously a lot of different scenes happening at once. There's punk and hardcore and all of their subgenres, but then there are also at least three relatively populous regions of the state. Do the reputations or personalities or vibes of certain scenes and regions vary a lot?

Yes, absolutely. I guess South Florida has always been a bit more notable in terms of the scene – and things have changed so much. It was always like South Florida was the more prominent one. I think Tampa was next because they had a cool venue called Transitions. When I was getting into hardcore, I saw so many videos of shows there. And I've been there a couple times. It was a really cool venue and obviously FYA Fest is there. And then Orlando – I can't really say Orlando has been too poppin' lately.

That band The Nightmare was from Orlando though, right? The Invisible Audio Bandcamp page is helpful for finding newer hardcore punk bands from Florida and the Southeast.

Yeah, that was one of the bands that was there. As far as I can tell her in the last couple years Orlando hasn't really had too many bands. The Nightmare was one of them. That band Dominant Force was another one. And even way before that there was a band called Gross that would play a lot. And a band called False Punk. I'd have to think, but I really don't know of many current bands there now. Oh. Most of Android's members were in Orlando.

It seems like Jacksonville and Tallahassee have got a little more poppin' lately with everyone being hyped on Protocol and Armor.

Yeah, dang, funny enough, Tallahassee is the only place in Florida, the only major city, that I have not been to and I've always wanted to play there or at least just go to a show there. But yeah, obviously, from what I've seen, it seems like Tallahassee has a pretty good scene. Every video I've seen there looks like they have a pretty decent amount of kids that come out. And I've asked some of the people in the band. I think I've asked Jeff or just told him, "Seems like a good scene. You guys always have a lot of people there," and he's like, "Not really." But I'm just like, "Dude, I'm watching the videos and it looks like there's a lot of people."

But yeah, Tallahassee seems cool. I'd still love to play there. I've been to a couple Jacksonville shows. I guess there's more capital-h hardcore that flows through there, but on Invisible Audio, I'm sure you saw there was a band from there called Plasma. That's one of the few punkier bands that I know that have come out of there.

Do kids freak out when Protocol comes to play Miami? I've been kicking myself for missing them at Everything Is Not OK Fest after seeing the video of their set where they used the Halo theme music as the intro and people were already stage diving.

Oh, trust me, I wish I was there, but I guess tickets flying there from Florida were not looking right. But yeah, I'm so mad I missed that, too. I think Protocol's played South Florida only a handful of times. I'm gonna say two or three times. And the last time I saw them, they played Miami at Space Mountain and there weren't a lot of kids there, but I think this was just a little bit after Bloodsport came out. So, you know, probably not a lot of people had heard it by then. But I was freaking out when they were playing. So, that's me. But I'm sure if they played now, they would probably get a bigger crowd.

Great venue name. What kind of spot is Space Mountain?

Well, it's unfortunately not a thing anymore. It died over quarantine and stuff. But Space Mountain was just some art space that this lady owned and if you wanted to book a show there, you'd just hit her up, but that was like the main venue we had for a long time. That was like the go-to because we had that and there was Churchill's, but it would be Space Mountain 75 percent of the time and then Churchill's 25 percent of the time.

What's Churchill's like?

Churchill's is like a bar/venue. It was a pretty decent size, so a lot of bigger bands would play there as well as small bands at a stage. Pretty run-down looking, but it's pretty historical, I guess. It has character. A lot of people had their mixed thoughts about it. Like I guess some people would be bummed that there'd be a show at Churchill's, but I like Churchill's. I like playing there. The floor sets were usually a lot cooler, but honestly, if enough people came, the stage shows would be pretty cool, too.

I've seen a couple things in the parking lot recently. But yeah, I don't know if they're still doing shows either. I don't know what things in Florida are still popping now.

To backtrack for a second, you mentioned your interaction with Tampa's scene. Did you ever see any bands from that era of Merchandise, Cult

Ritual, Church Whip, Nazi Dust, and Neon Blud?

No, I wish. I didn't get into Merchandise or Cult Ritual until way after Merchandise moved out of there and way past Cult Ritual breaking up. I have friends that were around for that era and they said it was cool. But what I was talking about was the more hardcore aspect of Tampa. I can remember there was a band that I really liked called Crisis Unit that was from there. Really old, like 2014 to 2016 era. I mean, to me it feels so old now.

But yeah, there was an era where that band was pretty prominent and there would be tours that would go to Tampa and not South Florida and then drive up. Fury played there and I went out for that and that was a pretty cool show.

Between the heavy hardcore FYA crowd, the DIY punks, and then even the scene around The Fest in Gainesville with the more melodic bands, is there ever much funny crossover or interaction between all of them?

Let me think. For the most part, off the top of my head, it didn't really cross over that much. But when The Talent Farm was around, or even a little bit after, there would be several occasions where there would be the mostly indie/pop-punk bill and then there would be a hardcore band on it, like a local hardcore band. Yeah, actually, especially during that era, there was that one era where they were doing the indie/pop-punk tours with hardcore bands, so during that time, it was pretty mixed up.

But other than that, everything's pretty much been separated. Yeah, not only that, I mean, I don't know too many softer bands from my scene that are a thing.

What's The Talent Farm?

Have you not heard of it?

I think I've heard the name, but I don't know anything about it.

Okay, I don't know why I assume everyone knows by now, but Talent Farm was just pretty much the venue for South Florida for a long time. I only started going there in 2012, but it's been around way before that, probably, I want to say 2009 or something like that, and it closed in 2015 I believe. Something like that.

But yeah, it was like the go-to venue for South Florida. Everything would play there. Pop-punk bands would play there, indie bands, and hardcore bands and whatever. Yeah, you name it.

So your band Jackal did a decent amount of touring and I think anyone who's not from a large coastal city always gets asked dumb questions about where they're from when they travel, like people asking about cows and The Wizard Of Oz with Kansas. Did you get any alligator questions when touring? How do people feel about Florida?

Oh, I definitely believe that we've gotten some typical alligator questions or whatever, but I think for the most part now, I think bands from Florida are getting a pretty good word in I guess. So when we went on our first weekender with Protocol and Deviant in 2017, that's two Florida bands on that, so we played Richmond and there was a pretty decent amount of kids there. And we played Baltimore, but that show we just jumped on so I don't really count that one. There was an okay amount of people, but we kinda didn't fit on the bill. But our D.C. show was pretty cool, too. We had a decent amount of people there.

Then the tour where you booked our show, that tour was, in my opinion, I had zero complaints about that tour. Every show was pretty well attended and well reacted in my opinion. So I guess people are a little excited to see a Florida band. And I pay really close attention to my friends' bands like Protocol and Armor, too, and they went on tour together and I know that that one was pretty well attended, too. I was checking the event pages and stuff, seeing if people were going. But yeah, I think people are starting to take Florida seriously I guess.

Do you think you could name a handful of current Florida bands you're into and what you like about each of them?

Oh, yes, this is me getting my list of shoutouts. All right, well, first of all, obviously Zig-Zag, of course. That band, man. Amazing. Very good to see live. I want to see that band tour so bad. I want people to see that band so, so bad. They played Oklahoma City once and from that, people seemed to like that set. So I don't know, I'm just itching for more.

Josie seems like an insane frontperson.

[Laughs] Yeah, that's partly why, like, it's not boring to watch. They're so entertaining and Flip is such a good musician. Anyway, that's one band, I really hope that they tour sometime.

Another band that recently started popping up is called Real People. They're honestly a bunch of newer people. I met them in 2019 and yeah, I saw them play a show at this venue called Loser Lounge and I was like, "Oh, damn, this is sick." Yeah, they're so awesome. And I think they've been getting a little bit of attention lately. I would love to see them tour, too. Them and Zig-Zag, I literally tell them, "Make sure you guys tour at some point. You have to do it at least once. Do a weekend or a week. Do something. Just please. I want people to see this."

I really love the first Real People tape. It was kind of just super fast, bratty hardcore punk. The second one I didn't love as much. It's a little more like garage rock-ish, almost. But it's still pretty solid.

Yeah, I think they were just experimenting a little bit more with that one. Because the first one was pretty straightforward, but it was so interesting because even though it was so straightforward, it wasn't boring. I think on the second one they were just trying to branch out of their comfort zone a little bit, but I definitely do see what you mean on that being a little garage rock-y. And I think I think the label that they put it on is in that type of area, too. So maybe that's why.

What's another band? Obviously the Android demo was pretty hot. Gosh, that's another band – I'm pretty good friends with the guitarist Daniel. Daniel and the singer moved from Orlando to New York over quarantine. But once again, I was just telling him, "You got a good thing going here. Make sure you do it right. Play out of town as much as you can." And I keep pushing them to release the demo on tape because they don't have a physical release for it, but I think it's finally in the works. So I guess keep an eye out for that.

What do you like about the Android sound?

Well, no band has sounded like that from Florida. I don't know. So as far as I know, I've just not heard something like that from Florida. And I love that they have kind of a theme going. I was talking to the singer a lot and he's really into a lot of robot movies and stuff like that and that's where a lot of the samples in the tape come from. They made those, but they try to sound as robotic as they can. And even the music itself subtly gives me a vibe that it fits the theme, and with the lyrics. And the fact that the singer says the name of the song before the song starts, I think that's cool.

There were a few bands I wanted to check in about. Are NSA, Spur, and Rhino still active?

NSA? I guess we're still a band. We haven't talked about music in the group chat in such a long time. But Flip and Toli, they write the music.

What's happening in the group chat then?

Literally nothing. I think almost a year ago they shared some songs that they were practicing. But the last text in the group chat was completely unrelated. It was Flip sharing a screenshot of someone discussing the Booger tape in class and that was May 29. But I mean, as far as I'm concerned, we're still a band. I guess I just have to be the one to say, "Hey, what are we gonna do next?"

Spur, I don't know if Spur is still a band. The singer now lives in Pittsburgh. But I follow them and they're like, "Oh, you know, whenever I visit home, Spur will play a show," but that was a long time ago. I'm sure they're still a band.

Rhino, that I don't know. Rhino might not be a band. Jackal, I don't think we're a band anymore. But we have a record that's like 65 percent done and I'm probably just going to release it eventually and that'll be like the final hurrah.

Florida is also pretty well known for hip-hop and death metal. Do you interact with either of those scenes or have local favorites?

In terms of death metal there's one band – I'm not too in touch with the metal scene in Florida. But I do love one of the bands there called Caveman Cult. That band is crazy. Amazing to see live. I think they recently put out a new record on tape which I recommend. If I went to a metal show it would mainly be to see that band. They're really good.

And actually the singer, he played in another band. It wasn't really a serious band, they didn't really do much, but it was called Hellmass. They had one recording and it wasn't the best quality, but God, watching that band live was so sick. They covered Celtic Frost's "Into The Crypt Of Rays" and that was the first time I've ever seen a band cover that and I was like, "What? Insane."

Yeah, I love getting to see hip-hop and hardcore on the same bill.

Yeah, both of those shows were so crazy. Because it's like two completely different crowds, hardcore kids and then people that are into rap and stuff and so many people would be at that and it was a fun time. I really enjoyed seeing those worlds collide.

PHOTO OF ZIG ZAG COURTESY OF CAMDEN PINK

Read full article at www.ShuttlecockMusic.com

Follow David on Instagram and Twitter at @poisonctrl for updates on his music and photography.

FLICKS

WORLD I HATE

FROM

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PHOTOS BY AARON RHODES

THE

S P I N E

MILITARIE GUN

GIG

JAN/FEB CONCERT CALENDAR

JANUARY

13

Supermoto w/ CS Luxem, Harper K, and Rachel Cion
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

14

Tupperware w/ D.Y.E. and Foil
@ Farewell (KC)

The String & Return w/ Abandoncy, Flooding, Midwestern, Goredoll, and DJ Hexblade
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

Raymond w/ Jass, Ricky Roosevelt, and JWR
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

15

Shuttlecock Presents: Extinction A.D. w/ Sarin Reaper
@ 7th Heaven (KC)

19

Strangle You w/ Side Eye, and Perfume
@ Farewell (KC)

20

Mellow Phobia w/ Blitz Pink, Output, and Counterculture
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

Capstan w/ OK O'Clock and Guest Service
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

21

Kacey Musgraves w/ King Princess and Muna
@ T-Mobile Center (KC)

Combatxcarl w/ Under Rated Society and Midwestern
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

22

No$kope w/ Prince Moe + others
@ Klymax Lounge (KC)

23

Loving
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

25

Shuttlecock Presents: Prize Horse w/ Flower Language, LK Ultra, and Internet Dating
@ Pussy Palace (KC)

Free Throw w/ Worst Party Ever, Charmer, and Camp Trash
@ The Rino (North KC)

26

Reptaliens w/ Renata Zeiguer
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

28

The Roseline w/ Hello Biplane
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

The Freedom Affair w/ Grand Marquis and DJ Elgin Smith
@ recordBar (KC)

29

Tech N9ne w/ Joey Cool and Jehry Robinson
@ The Granada (LFK)

30

Shuttlecock Presents: Sidestep w/ Guest Service and Abandoncy
@ Farewell (KC)

FEBRUARY

1

Elton John
@ T-Mobile Center (KC)

2

Wale
@ Uptown Theater (KC)

4

Hembree w/ Madisen Ward and Dreamgirl
@ The Truman (KC)

5

Baroness
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

Ian Sweet w/ Bnny and Pure XTC
@ recordBar (KC)

8

Marcus King
@ Uptown Theater (KC)

9

The Black Angels w/ The Vacant Lots
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

The Beach Boys
@ Kauffman Center (KC)

10

Nick Mason
@ Kauffman Center (KC)

Druids w/ Migrator and Guest Service
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

11

Jordan Baumstark w/ Sleepwvlker, Supermoto, and Laaee Uzumak!
@ miniBar (KC)

Kyle w/ Col3trane and Levan Keli
@ The Granada (LFK)

12

Sleigh Bells
@ The Truman (KC)

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band
@ Knuckleheads (KC)

13

Knuckle Puck w/ Hot Mulligan, Meet Me @ The Altar, and Anxious
@ The Granada (LFK)

14

Guardin w/ Convolk and Sewerperson
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

15

The Kid Laroi
@ Arvest Bank Theatre at The Midland (KC)

17

Manchester Orchestra w/ Foxing
@ Uptown Theater (KC)

The Iceman Special w/ Lil Heavn and ATM
@ Replay Lounge (LFK)

19

Tyler, The Creator w/ Vince Staples, Kali Uchis, and Teezo Touchdown
@ Cable Dahmer Arena (Independence)

Lucy Dacus w/ Indigo De Souza
@ Liberty Hall (LFK)

Tommy Cash
@ Encore at Uptown Theater (KC)

20

Shame w/ They Hate Change
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

21

Machine Girl w/ Evic Shen
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

22

Beach House
@ Arvest Bank Theatre at The Midland (KC)

Low Cut Connie
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

23

A Place To Bury Strangers w/ TV Priest
@ The Bottleneck (LFK)

Ghost w/ Volbeat and Twin Temple
@ Cable Dahmer Arena (Independence)

25

Slash (ft. Miles Kennedy & The Conspirators) w/ Plush
@ Arvest Band Theatre at The Midland (KC)

Dug
@ miniBar (KC)

Visit the concert calendar at www.ShuttlecockMusic.com for ticket links and more info on upcoming shows.

BLOGROLL

BY AARON RHODES

The magazine accidentally took a four month break so this local music media digest is relatively long. Enjoy (or don't).

Find links to all of the content highlighted here in the online version of this article, which can be found at www.ShuttlecockMusic.com.

AUDIO CONTENT

-Kevin Morby on How Long Gone
If you can tolerate or (as I often do) enjoy the snarky but self-aware hosts of How Long Gone, their recent episode with Kevin Morby is a winner. Chris Black and Jason Stewart disclose that they had not listened to Morby's latest album, *Sundowner*, but Morby doesn't seem to mind. Instead, they chat for about an hour about their varying levels of tennis skills, Morby's adult pastime of hitting the batting cages, handling overzealous concert attendees, and how his song "Harlem River" ended up being used in three different commercials.

-Stik Figa on Long Play Listening Party
Long Play Listening Party is a music discussion podcast hosted by Kansas City area musicians/producers Howie Howard (Mars Lights), Nate Holt (Asterales), and Royce Diamond. Back in November, they uploaded three half-hour podcasts featuring Kansas (now Texas-based) rapper Stik Figa. The first episode includes discussion on his recent *East Of MacVicar Ave* EP, the second features his recent self-titled EP, and the third "goes deep" on anything and everything else Stik Figa.

-Hard Stance Hardcore Podcast
If that lengthy My Favorite Merch interview with Antonio Marquez (Spine) wasn't enough for you, press play on the first few episodes of the Hard Stance Hardcore Podcast. Hosted by Marquez, John Hoffman (Weekend Nachos), and Nick Donahue (Droids Blood, Broken Prayer, Violent End), each episode includes a lengthy conversation on one classic hardcore album and a shorter segment about a newer record. Episode one features some Gorilla Biscuits hot takes and Electric Chair praise.

-Vagrant Records: 25 Years On The Street
Vagrant Records became a big name in punk rock and emo in 1999 after signing The Get Up Kids and releasing their hit album *Something To Write Home About*. So who better to host a podcast series about the label's 25 year anniversary than Get Up Kids vocalist/guitarist Matt Pryor. The series features an episode on the label's origins before getting talking to some of their most popular bands. I personally loved the Alkaline Trio episode. Members of the Trio talk about how they signed to Vagrant because they trusted the judgment of The Get Up Kids, how the tone used on their album *Crimson* directly inspired the production on Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone," and how Gerard Way borrowed a member's priest costume, wore it on stage, and never gave it back.

-Jim Suptic on Third Gear Scratch
Host and fellow Kansas City area rocker Allen Epley (Shiner) sits down with Jim Suptic from The Get Up Kids to talk about Suptic's involvement in the annual charity event Thundergong, The Get Up Kids' early years, their record deal, and touring with Weezer.

-Liam Kazar and A.C. Newman on the Talkhouse Podcast
Two men with plenty of indie rock bona fides sit down for this episode of the Talkhouse Podcast. Newman (known for his solo music and his work in The New Pornographers) interviews recent Kansas City transplant Liam Kazar about his new album, songwriting process, his family, social media, and more. (Hopefully by now you've listened to Kazar's debut album and seen his episode of Record Shopping with Shuttlecock).

-Center Cuts podcasts
Shaun Crowley stopped by on episode 29 of Center Cut Records' podcast to discuss Kansas City's music scene, his band Momma's Boy, and his project of building a nonprofit record store and bar in Kansas City, Kansas. Station To Station (Michelle Bacon's podcast on the Center Cuts feed) also featured an episode with The Greeting Committee's vocalist Addie Sartino (the band's new album, *Dandelion*, is out now).

HARD STANCE PODCAST

VIDEO CONTENT

-Coop Sessions
Since our last Blogroll, Coop Sessions has uploaded new performances from Bummer and Hembree. Both come with the Shuttlecock Seal Of Approval. (Hembree also filmed a killer live cover of Talking Heads' "Girlfriend Is Better" recently, which you can find on the band's YouTube channel.)

-Frogpond live session on 90.9 The Bridge
After a long-awaited reunion, the Kansas City quartet hit the 90.9 The Bridge studios to play three songs from their new album *TimeThief*.

-Live @ KJHK
Recent uploads from the University Of Kansas radio station's studio include sessions from Chicago indie band (including a sibling of Liam Kazar's) Ohmme and local R&B ensemble Supermoto.

READING MATERIAL

-Saberpages issue 1
Founded by Andres Nelso in 2017, Saber is a music and culture outlet based in Kansas City. After releasing eight issues of its longform print and digital magazine, the first issue of a new monthly publication called Saberpages was released in November. This 40 page book includes short features on rapper Zeph France and KC Mac N Co. owner Dwight Tiller II, a journal entry about the frustrations of online sex work, a near-future sci-fi involving racial politics, and more. Nelso's background in graphic design (he's attended school at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) is apparent in this full color edition as well. This issue is available for purchase at The Black Pantry in Kansas City or online at SaberMagazine.com.

-Riley The Musician went to Montana and came back Ana - Allison Harris, The Pitch
If you'd like a brief introduction to the music of Riley The Musician before you dive into our 80 minute Shuttlecock Podcast episode with her, you can find a profile written by Allison Harris in the October issue of The Pitch (and on the magazine's website).

-Skeletons and constant sorrow - Nick Spacek, The Pitch
This profile on Lawrence country-rock band The Roseline highlights the relatively unconventional writing and recording process of the band's new album *Constancy*. Also discussed: primary songwriter Colin Halliburton's townie lifestyle, escaping the trap of writing too literally about the pandemic, and the tweaks made to the band's signature sound this time around. Find it in the December issue of The Pitch or online.

-Writer Dan Ozzi on his new book Sellout and the rise of punk on major labels - Nick Spacek, The Pitch
Veteran punk rock journalist Dan Ozzi, who in addition to his many bylines helped Against Me!'s Laura Jane Grace craft her first book, talked with Nick about how punk rock and major labels have interacted since the genre's inception in the late '70s. Get a taste of the new book and find out who Ozzi believes are some of the most important and interesting bands in this ongoing subcultural exchange.

-The Epitome isn't just a sound, it's a world - Nick Spacek, The Pitch
Read this profile and get to know better one of Kansas City hip-hop's foremost nerds.

-BLK + BRWN bookstore aims to amplify America's most vibrant voices - Cameron Capers, The Pitch
First off, a belated salute to friend of the magazine Cameron Capers on his first Pitch byline (he has since logged interviews with Porches, Crumb, and Colony House). In his debut piece, Capers interviews Cori Smith, the owner of the BLK + BRWN bookstore (located at 104 ½ W. 39th St., Kansas City, Missouri) which opened in June 2021.

-Dave One wants you to know, and see, his name - Chase Castor, The Pitch
I can't recall a more polarizing figure in my time living in Midtown than Dave One. Reddit threads and social media posts regularly lament his presence and a dedicated website has catalogged his work. The mysterious and remarkably prolific graffiti writer is humanized in the piece written and photographed by Chase Castor, exploring what motivated the young vandal to write his name on every inch of real estate he can manage. Cheers to The Pitch for running this even though Dave had previously tagged the front door of the magazine's office.

-How Ed Asner's brother Ben and his Capers Corners record store rocked Kansas City's music scene - Randy Mason, The Kansas City Star
Another Blogroll, another story about a long-closed area record store. Ben Asner sounds like a character I would have enjoyed meeting. Fun fact for any Sippin' On Some Soda podcast fans: JFK (the 1991 Oliver Stone film featuring Ed Asner as Guy Bannister) is Kirby's favorite movie.

-Patria y Vida: Spine fights for a free Cuba on Himnos Mambises - EvanMC, Cvlt Nation
This Cvlt Nation interview with Antonio Marquez and Max Chaney of Spine includes talk on the music of the band's latest EP, its decision to release it on a DIY label, and the revolutionary politics in Cuba that inspired it.

-Hautepop - Allison Harris, Ringtone
Allison Harris is one of my favorite Kansas City area music writers and I'm very excited about their new column in Ringtone Mag which will aim to explore fashion in the hyperpop scene. Runway shows, music videos, social media posts, photo shoots, and concert looks will all be dissected. The column thus far has included bits on Charli XCX, Arca, Bladee, Ecco2k, and the late Sophie. As of now, three editions are available for you to read.

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SODA SELECTOR

BY AARON RHODES

Welcome back, soda sippers. Since I last wrote you, I broke my promise of an immediate follow-up issue, and I apologize for that. But what are you gonna do? Life happens. Soda helps, though. I have a small handful of new soda tries that I'll share with you below.

My last trip to KC Soda Co. in the River Market was quite fruitful. One of my first picks was a can of 1919 root beer. I had remembered seeing it posted on the shop's social media pages a couple different times when they received shipments, so I knew it was a hot commodity. I am here to confirm to you that it is indeed worth the hype. From the first sip, I knew it was near the top of my list of favorite root beers (a category you all know I don't consider myself an expert or completely passionate connoisseur of). This root beer was perfectly frothy, made with real sugar and real vanilla. And yet another fine export from the state of Minnesota. Due to my fandom of the Northern Soda Company, I asked the shop owner why Minnesota is so good at soda and he enlightened me: beer country is most often soda country as well, seeing that both refreshments require similar equipment to manufacture. Quite the revelation for an idiot like me. I've seen that 1919 offers miniature kegs of its root beer and I would love to own one at some point. (Unrelated note: my birthday is January 5.)

Another Soda Co. grab was a Faygo Rock & Rye in a glass bottle. Rock & Rye rocks. It's a vanilla cherry cream soda according to one web page I checked since there wasn't much copy on the bottle itself and I was a bit unsure just from the taste. This would be a regular purchase for me if it were widely available, containing the perfect amount of sweet, syrupy-ness without going overboard. That same web page also likened it to a cocktail, so perhaps this would make a fun mixer if you need one.

In a rogue move, I ended up buying two root beers on my Soda Co. trip. This selection from Peace Tree Brewing Co. came at the recommendation of the shop owner. I'll have to ask him next time what he enjoys about it. It's not an awful root beer by any means, but it only barely surpasses America's big three root beer brands. There is a slightly distinctive aftertaste that may come thanks to the beet sugar that is noted on the label, but this still doesn't add much to the equation. No hate to this Knoxville, Iowa brand, but I should've known I may not be down for this one considering the hippie-style packaging.

One final soft drink for this month was found sitting in my fridge the other day. My roommate Jana had purchased a Pumpkin Spice Tonic (made by Orca Beverages) from the Halloween shelf at World Market a month ago and abandoned it before allowing me to crack it open myself. I worried the spice would be too overwhelming, but the drink's creaminess gave it a solid amount of balance and made it surprisingly drinkable. Though it's not simply a mixer beverage as I had predicted, this is still a seasonal drink for a reason. Fall was nice. We'll all probably be freezing our asses off again by the time you're reading this.

'Til next time, cheers.

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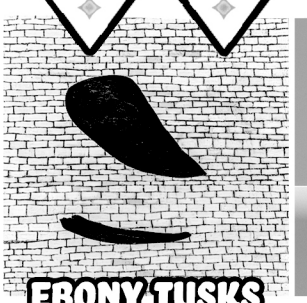

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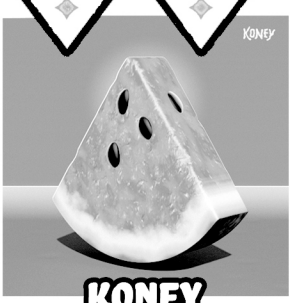

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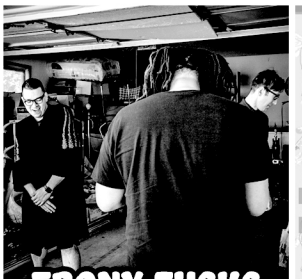

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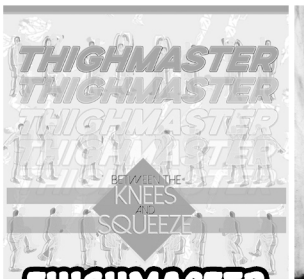

THIGHMASTER
BETWEEN THE KNEES AND SQUEEZE

THE EMPTY MOON
THE EMPTY MOON STORY

THE CREEPY JINGLES
SELF TITLED